MUSINGS OF A QUIET HOUR

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MUSINGS

OF A

QUIET HOUR

BY

JOHN S. HALL

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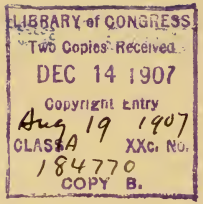

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BY JOHN S. HALL

TO MRS. SUE HALL NEWMAN

PREFACE

I OFFER this little volume to the public with a great deal of diffidence. When I first began writing verses I had no thought of putting out a book. The thoughts came to me in quiet hours, and I put them down in rhyme, partly for pastime, and partly to please my own fancy. The importunities of some of my intimate friends are responsible for their publication. The work makes no pretensions to literary merit. It is merely a collection of reminisences, anticipations, and my own ideals of personal character. The sentiments expressed are from my experiences and observations. If its perusal affords consolation, or lightens the burdens of sorrow, or inspires any one with higher aspirations or loftier purposes, I shall be amply rewarded for this effort.

JOHN S. HALL.

St. Marys, W. Va.,
August 13, 1907.

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THE FLUTTER MILL

THEY say I 'm growing old, Harlan,
I scarce can think it so,
Yet memory takes me back to scenes
Of fifty years ago,
When you and I were boys together,
And played beside the ril'
That wandered near the old farm house,
And turned our flutter mill.

The rill, it runs to brook and creek,
And to the river wide,
Until within the ocean deep
It mingles with the tide.
How like the stream of life it is!
At first a rippling rill,
Then wandering on 'mid shifting scenes
It turns our flutter mill.

We still are playing 'long this stream,
They call it business now,
The difference seems but in the name,
'Tis much the same, I 'low.

We strive for fortune and for fame,
'Tis all for pleasure still,
For work is only grown up play,
And life a flutter mill.

We launch our bark in childish play,
We drift or push along
O'er riffles swift, through eddying pools,
And currents deep and strong,
And out on life's expanded sea
Whose surface ne'er is still,
The restless motion of the waves
Now turns our flutter mill.

No castles built however grand
In interest can compare
With those we built beside that rill—
Our castles in the air.
Amid the hum of enterprise
The ripple of that rill
Still echoes in my heart, as when
It turned our flutter mill.

We may be growing old, Harlan.
I scarce can think it, though,
For every ripple of that rill
Brings back the long ago.
Each dimpled wave that sported there
Still makes my heart to thrill,
As in those barefoot days we watched
It turn our flutter mill.

A SILVER WEDDING

NO bells more sweet than wedding bells,
No bliss more sweet than wedded bliss;
True love the same old story tells—
No sweeter tale e'er told than this.

The Silver Wedding often finds
The life mellowed by thoughtful care;
Yet 'round the heart Love still entwines
The sacred memories gathered there.

Together silent sit the twain:
Just five and twenty years ago
They linked their hearts with Love's gold chain,
And pledged their lives for weal or woe.

They 're thinking—thinking o'er those years;
To hallowed scenes their thoughts incline:
Sunshine and shadow—mirth and tears—
Like fantoms play 'round mem'ry's shrine.

The bridal wreath to silver turns;
More softly glows each passing year,
As on the marriage altar burns
Some incense sweet, to memory dear.

The storied urn—its silent dust—
Appeals to hearts oppressed with care,
While memory holds in sacred trust
The priceless treasures gathered there.

Mayhap some silver chord is broken;
'Mid lovelit scenes a shadow steals;
The saddest thoughts are oft unspoken—
The sweetest joys the heart reveals.

Though tinged the hair with silver-gray,
Though deepening lines on pensive brow,
The love that blest the nuptial day
Is gentler, sweeter, holier, now.

RESPONSIBILITY—A PARAPHRASE

ONE man the alcohol does make,
Another sells it bit by bit,
One rents his place for business' sake,
Another votes to license it.

One drinks it and becomes a sot,
His wife and children want for bread;
A pauper's grave the only spot
To welcome him when he is dead.

If you can tell which one of those
Will go to Hell and which to Heaven,
You're wiser than I dared suppose—
To you some wonderous gift is given.

ODE TO PEACE

OH, gentle peace, on white wings poised,
Thou seest the world is much ajar,
Stretch forth thy hand and hush the noise
And bid the nations cease from war.

Bid kings the golden rule obey;
Let nation's feel thy magic wand;
And arbitration rule the day;
'Twill be the golden age of man.

Thou hast thy heroes true and brave,
No less than those of war's renown;
'Tis better far, a life to save,
Than wear the victor's blood stained crown.

Though sacred are the laurels won,
And honored be the battle scar,
Better live 'neath a peaceful sun,
Than die amidst the storms of war.

Let clouds of war no more arise,
Nor nations do each other harm.
How sweet to dwell 'neath peaceful skies,
Nor dread the war's alarm!

On white wings poised, Oh, gentle peace!
'Twixt warring earth and tranquil heaven;
May war and strife forever cease,
And sins of nations be forgiven.

THE THUNDER STORM

I LOVE to watch the storm clouds rise,
Portentous, dark, athwart the skies,
And hear the rumblings from afar
That set the elements ajar
And break the deep tranquility.

I love to see the lightnings flash,
And hear the thunder's awful crash
That shakes the silence of the deep,
And rouses nature from her sleep
To mingle in the revelry.

I well remember when a child
I watched the storm grow fierce and wild;
I stood in awe, but not in fright,
And gazed upon the wond'rous sight—
It filled my soul with ecstasy.

When madd'ning furies of the blast,
On high their lightning lances cast,
And roll the thunder drum's alarm,
And charge the phalanx of the storm,
To me the scene was awe-inspiring.

Though dark the clouds and tempest driven,
Their somber folds by lightnings riven,

And thunder voices rend the air,
And danger threatens everywhere,
Above the storm, peace rests serene.

When hush the winds, and clouds retreat,
And thunder drums more faintly beat,
The mutt'rings sound from distance far
Like rumblings of some funeral car,
Bearing its solemn load somewhere.

Then smiles from earth will upward rise,
And catch the glories of the skies,
And Heaven flings them everywhere,
And nature breathes her sweetness there,
And beauty charms the world anew.

GOD TELLS US SO

THOUGH life be sweet, to die is gain.
The living only suffer pain.
Death is a soothing balm that heals
The bitter pang that sorrow feels,
And opens wide the gates of Heaven,
To those for whom Christ's life was given.
Though dark the veil that intervenes,
It only hides far brighter scenes,
Than eye hath seen, or heart can know,
For in his word God tells us so.

WHY MOURN

WE mourn for the dead, the sorrow is ours;
The heart that is still can suffer no pain;
We garland their memory with love's
sweetest flowers.
We weep, for our tears we cannot restrain.

We mourn for the dead, memory is ours;
True love is divine, it never can die;
Its fragrance comes back from celestial flowers—
We breathe it, we feel it, yet we wonder why,

We mourn for the dead, fond hope is still ours;
It beckons us on like Bethlehem's star,
To sunnier climes, amid fairer flowers,
Where nothing their beauty ever can mar.

We mourn for the dead, eternity's ours;
What matters our days be many or few?
We flourish the while like a tender flower,
We rise to our God like the morning dew.

SHADOWS

SINCE the smile of creation awoke the dawn,
And the light responded to Jehovah's call,
In the midst of the scenes the shadows creep on,
Some soft as a halo, some dark as a pall.
Wherever there is light there shadows may be,
'Twixt the light and the shadows some cause intervenes;
If the cause be removed, the shadow will flee,
And the sunlight again will brighten the scenes.

Every shadow is shaped in its maker's mold,
Tho' often distorted by tortuous rays;
So the shadows of life we sometimes behold,
Are only the pictures that Fancy portrays.
The shadow of the earth is darkness or night,
The shadow of the soul is sorrow or grief,
And beyond each shadow lies a golden light,
Where the soul, like the world, may turn for relief.

While some of the shadows hang heavy and low,
And hover like gloom in a leaden sky,
Yet many are light as crystals of snow,
And, fleeting as a moment, flit softly by.
So sorrows, like shadows, oft hang like a pall
Oppressing the spirits as some ugly dream;
But how sweet the waking at some friendly call,
And to find that some things are not what they seem.

In summer, when Nature is wreathed in bright flowers,
Exhaling their sweetness like blessings divine,
And the sunlight is falling in golden showers,
And the forests in varying beauty shine,
'Neath the foliage green, like elfins at play,
With footsteps as noiseless as the opening leaves,
The shadows are dancing to the wind's soft lay,
On the velvet-like carpet that the springtime weaves.

In the summer of life, ere the heart hath grown
Familiar with shadows that darken the way,
Or garnered the fruits that Deception hath sown,
The thoughts of the youth are mere shadows at play;
When autumn hath scattered her blossoms and leaves,
We are apt to forget the harvest's rich store,
And donning the mantle that Discontent weaves,
We sulk in the shadows that shelter our door.

Though the soul by sorrows be sorely oppressed,
And the heart be broken by griefs hard to bear,
And the sun of our joy has gone down in the west,
And the night is made darker by clouds of despair,
There is ever a light, beyond and above,
Where shadows are playing 'mid ambrosial bowers;
Through tear-drops of sorrow, the sunshine of love
A rainbow is painting on clusters of flowers.

THAT PLAIN LITTLE GIRL AND I

THERE 'S a girl that I knew long ago,
Not a beauty as most beauties go,
But just a plain girl, with never a curl
Of flaxen or golden hair,
But a sort of a "don't care" air,
That carries her through, whate'er she may do,
And that is the girl I knew.

We studied together at school,
We often disobeyed the rule,
But cared not a feather, if punished together,
That plain little girl and I,
As we stood with our faces awry,
Just trying a while to smother a smile,
That plain Little Girl and I.

If I were but punished alone,
I knew very well there was one,
A plain little child with a pitying smile,
Who was kind'y thinking of me;
While smarting with pain I could see,
Though one was to blame, we suffered the same,
That plain Little Girl and I.

If I asked her the reason why
My punishment made her to cry,
She but hung her head, as she shyly said
With a sweet childish smile, "Oh cause."
There was much in her answer, "Cause;"
To me it revealed a secret concealed
In a heart both tender and true.

We were called little lovers, when
The years of our lives numbered ten.
It might have been true for all that we knew.
But of this however I 'm sure,
That the love of children is pure,
So we cared not a feather, but played on together,
That plain Little Girl and I.

O, how swiftly our school days pass,
And what do they leave us? Alas!
Ere I was near grown, her childhood had flown,
And left her a maiden shy,
While a rollicking boy was I;
But a sort of unrest crept into my breast,
As I looked at the maiden shy.

She had entered the social band,
I lingered in the play-house land,
Standing at the door, she smiled as of yore,
But a tear drop stood in her eye,
As she bade her play-days good-bye.
Light hearted were we, in our childhood free,
That plain Little Girl and I.

Neither time nor a maid will wait
For a boy that lingers too late;
So while I yet tarried, the maiden got married,
To one much older than I,
And still I am wondering why
We drifted apart in mind and in heart,
That plain Little Girl and I.

A SPASM

FROM eternity starting,
To eternity darting,
This life is only a span;
We are born and we die,
We laugh and we cry,
And this is the end of man.

THE UPRIGHT MAN

THOUGHTS stamp their impress on the face,
And so the inner man reveal;
And there the heart will often trace
That which the mind would vain conceal.

The noblest work that God hath wrought
Is upright man, with courage true,
Who harbors not a harmful thought,
Who sees and dares the right to do.

He ever scorns an action base
And never stoops to gain an end,
But walks upright, with steady pace,
Content to be a man with men.

He spurns deception's rich rewards,
And bears himself with open mien;
His every promise sacred guards,
And strives to keep his record clean.

The Golden Rule is e'er his guide,
In business or in social life;
Success and Truth walk side by side
Amid the world's contending strife.

And standing at life's well-earned goal,
  At peace with God and all mankind,
With pitying eye he there beholds
  Deception's victims left behind.

He boasts him not of vain success,
  Nor generous deeds he may have done;
But lifts his heart with thankfulness
  When he a grateful smile hath won.

The world admires an upright man,
  And Heaven marks him for her own;
It is of God's eternal plan,
  To honor such around His throne.

RHYTHMIC ECHOES

ECHO, as tradition goes,
Was once a mystic muse;
Juno was a goddess fair,
Who did her power abuse,
Depriving Echo of her form,
And everything but voice,
E'en in the use of words, she left
The muse without a choice.

She dwells among the rocks and caves,
Repeating what she hears;
To those who seek her biding place,
She never once appears.
And yet through all the ages lives,
In every land is known,
She answers just what she may hear
In manner, word and tone.

Oft when I sit in silent dream,
My thoughts come o'er and o'er;
They seem like echoes from the past,
Or some fond friends of yore.

With every life, an Echo born
Keeps childhood's memory green,
And from the buried past, we oft,
Sweet recollections glean.

And from the far away unknown,
The echoing spirits bring,
The music that our waiting souls
In joy or sorrow sing.
There is no place that's echoeless,
In heaven, or earth or hell,
Our thoughts, our words, our deeds return,
Within the heart to dwell.

KINDNESS

A LITTLE kindness now and then
Will brighten oft the Might Have Been,
And make it shine a sweeter Now.
When sorrow's clouds are hanging low,
In some sad heart 'twill start a glow,
That will, like morning twilight grow
Into a bright and gladsome day,
With cooling shadows 'long the way,
To calm to rest the troubled brow.

A kindly smile is love's sunshine,
Reflection of a soul divine,
Implanted in the human breast;
As dew drops gleam like diamonds bright,
When falls the sunbeam, soft and light,
And mellow dawn dissolves the night,
So sorrow's clouds will lighter seem,
Or vanish like some fitful dream,
Beneath a smile by kindness blest.

A simple act, in kindness done,
May often help some weary one,
Life's steep and stony hill to climb;
And if, perchance, a brother stray,
'Mid shifting scenes that round him play,
'Tis well to kindly show the way;
Our light, if constant kept in view,
May guide another safely through,
And help to make both lives sublime.

THE BROOK IN THE WILDWOOD

OH, carry me back to the brooklet
That I knew in the long ago,
That sported with me in the wildwood
Where the music is soft and low.

I would drink again at its fountain,
And wade in its waters so clear;
And gather the pebbles there shining
Like pearls in a fair maiden's ear.

My life was as gay as the wavelets,
That, leaping like fairies in air,
Had playfully caught some stray sunbeams
And held them all shimmering there.

My thoughts were as free as its movements,
As it danced o'er the pebbly floor;
My burdens as light as the leaflets
On its bosom it playfully bore.

It reflected the smiles I gave it,
And whispered back softly to me;
Its murmur was sweeter than music,
Its ripples than soft melody.

The song birds that bathed in its waters,
Were never so happy as I,
As I played with the brook when a child,
And dreamed of the sweet by and by.

Ever hallowed be the memory of youth,
And golden the hope that unfolds
A future with portals wide open,
Revealing what childhood beholds.

Let me play once more in the wildwood,
Where whispers the brook soft and low,
And the shadows are lightly falling
As they fell in the long ago.

THE ANGELS

I OFTEN have heard of the angels;
They dwell in the Land of Unknown,
Where the soft light ever is falling,
Like smiles from Immanuel's throne.
They are pictured with wings of gossamer,
Their garments as crystals of snow,
And sweeter than music their laughter;
On errands of mercy they go.

Like the sheen of silver their glances
Fall lightly on hearts sore oppressed:
Their voices are soft as a zephyr,
That hushes the birdlings to rest;
They move with the speed of a moment,
As noiseless as the ether's wave;
They pause at the shrine of bereavement,
To hallow the tear on the grave.

How often the heart loves to linger
At the shrine where buried hopes lie,
To gather the sweet recollections
That cluster 'round the years gone by.
Some give themselves over to sadness,—
To brood over trouble is sin;
There 's an angel for every sorrow,
Awaiting a welcome within.

When the clouds hang heavy and darkest,
And the soul is bowed down by care,
Like the peace that passeth understanding,
The comforting angel is there.
His presence makes lighter our burdens,
Yet drives not the clouds from the skies,
It but makes them airy and golden,
And calmly our spirits arise.

The Angel of Death bears the spirits
From earth to the Realm of Unknown;
It may be his mission seems cruel,
Yet God is but taking his own;
And what, after all, does it matter,
If taken at eighty or ten?
The blessings of life and eternity
Are made for the children of men.

This life, as compared with hereafter,
Is only a tottering span,
Swayed by the breath of uncertainty,
'Twixt the earth and the heavenly strand.
Then why should the spirits immortal,
Who linger below for a time,
Mourn long for the loved ones, departed
To dwell in a sunnier clime?

Every soul has its angel guardian,
Reflecting bright smiles from above,
As silent as the roses breathing,
As real is his presence as love.

I often have seen them in visions,
  They visit the land of my dream;
Don't tell me that they are unreal,
  And angels are not what they seem!

They welcomed the dawn of Creation,
  They talked with the prophets of old,
They sang the sweet song of Redemption,
  Of Christ's Resurrection they told;
And often the souls in transition
  To their sorrowing friends declare,
That angels are gathering about them,
  And many a loved one is there.

This life would be dreary without them,
  The future as dark as despair;
And surely grim Death would be victor
  If angels are not to be there.
And what are these spirits? you ask me;
  I answer, they are Thoughts Divine;
The sources of man's inspiration,
  The union 'twixt God and mankind.

ODE TO SUMMER

ALL hail to thee, beautiful Summer,
With thy flowers so fragrant and fair,
Thy breath, as the zephyrs from Eden,
Ever filling with sweetness the air.
Thy laugh, as the ripple of waters,
Or music from the leafy bowers;
Thy smiles, as the sunshine, are falling
In liquid and in golden showers.

Thy shadows are ever inviting
The traveler, way-worn and weary;
And there, amid the cool and silence,
When life's way is lonely and dreary,
Kneeling, he offers to the Mightiest,
His solemn supplication, sincere,
With a sweet sensation, that tells him
In this shrine his God is ever near.

When twilight is greeting the morning,
The starlight retiring in the west,
And the dew drops sparkle like diamonds
On the blossoms that bloom on thy breast,
We bow in humble adoration,
To thy God and his wonderful ways,
And in heart unite in the chorus,
With the songsters singing thy praise.

SOMEWHERE

'TIS always morning somewhere;
On this round earth, I've found
The twilight air is chasing
The darkness round and round.

'Tis always springtime somewhere;
Where flowers sweetly bloom.
The sunshine softly glowing,
Dispels the wintry gloom.

The sun is shining somewhere,
Though clouds may intervene,
There is a land above them
Where shadows ne'er are seen.

The birds are singing somewhere;
Their music follows on
The heels of night retreating
Before the waking dawn.

There is always pleasure somewhere
For those who seek her shrine;
Around the life unselfish,
Love's sweetest flowers entwine.

The path of life leads somewhere;
We tread it not alone,
There 's One who walks beside us,
Our path was once His own.

We leave our footprints somewhere,
That time cannot efface,
And those who follow after
Our wandering way may trace.

There is a Heaven somewhere,
We hope some day to find;
Yet oft we ne'er consider
The trail we leave behind.

Yet Christ is ever somewhere;
Just waiting all the while,
To gild the sinner's footprints,
With His forgiving smile.

There in that Land of Somewhere,
The penitent will find,
How golden are the footprints,
Forgiveness leaves behind.

THE EVENING OF LIFE

OLD age is but the twilight's glow;
It softer grows as night comes on;
The evening song is soft and low,
A sweet refrain of youth long gone.

The innocence of childhood rests,
Where once it danced in childish glee,
And blesses now where once 'twas blest,
And heaven smiles approvingly.

The golden sunbeams slanting fall,
And gild the clouds that fringe the sky.
From sacred depths sweet voices call,
And hallowed memories bring them nigh.

Fond recollections linger long,
Like autumn's tinted leaves and sear,
As if they would the years prolong
Among the graves time hallows here.

The evening shadows soft and gray
Are blending with the mellow light,
Where floods of golden sunshine lay,
When day was young and skies were bright.

As softly fades the twilight glow,
  There faintly gleams life's evening star,
Which bright and brighter seems to grow,
  As swing the gates of heaven ajar.

The arching bow, the sinking sun
  Is painting on the evening sky,
Is heaven's coronet for one
  Who scans the past with thoughtful eye;

Who views the future with delight,
  And calmly trusts with faith sublime,
That stars will light the coming night—
  The gateway to a sunnier clime.

God seems to love serene old age.
  He crowns it with celestial white;
He smiles upon life's checkered page,
  And leaves his record clean and bright.

It must be sweet, with snowy crown,
  At peace with God and all mankind,
To calmly lay life's burdens down,
  And leave no vain regrets behind.

THE LAND OF DREAM

I PASSED from the queer land of dream,
Where things are not all that they seem,
And thoughts are mere fancies at play.
Noiseless as vapors I drifted,
'Mid scenes that constantly shifted,
Like clouds when in martial array.

I dream in the years that are flown,
Of people to memory well known,
Now gone to that echoing shore;
From it in silence returning,
As if for friendship still yearning,
They meet us, they greet us once more.

Their presence seems vague and mysterious,
Their faces serenely serious,
We know they are not of this sphere.
I wonder if spirits may know
What friends are about here below?
Oh, could they but speak to us here!

Would they but tell us weak mortals,
What lies there beyond death's portals?
Our lives would be different then here;
We 'd live as the angels in heaven,
No sins on earth to be forgiven,
And death no longer would we fear.

'Tis only in dreamland we mortals,
Lingering this side of heaven's portals,
May meet them again face to face,
And know that our loved ones somewhere,
Waiting our coming over there,
Will greet us in lasting embrace.

All dreams are not born in slumber;
Often they come without number,
Invading our quiet meditation
And bear us on wings ethereal,
Through trackless regions aerial,
To realms of fancy's creation.

When care or sorrow oppresses,
Often we may feel caresses,
Tender as an angel's embrace;
A touch that gently reminds us,
Of never forgotten kindness,
Soothing as a smile on the face.

How sweet is the queer land of dream,
Where fancy reigns ever supreme,
And things for the time seem real!
The soul that once basks in its clime,
And tastes of its pleasures sublime,
Will better and happier feel.

THE GLAD THANKSGIVING

LET every heart be thankful,
For Heaven's bounteous store;
For God hath crowned our labors,
He 'll feed us evermore.

'Tis ours to walk and trust Him,
His grace will do the rest;
He 'll never see us suffer
If we but do our best.

Spring is the time for planting;
The summer brings the flower;
The fruit in autumn ripens,
To glad the wintry hour.

We plant the seed He gives us,
And tend it as we will;
The harvest that we garner,
May be for good or ill.

When gathered round the homestead,
With friends and kindred dear,
We find that many blessings
Have crowned the passing year.

Mayhap around the table
There sits a vacant chair—
Yet nothing half so sacred
As memories garnered there.

Oh, may we e'en be grateful
For memory's sacred store;
Our lives will shine the brighter
When nearing Heaven's shore.

Some day the family circle
Again will be complete,
And all life's fruit be garnered—
The bitter with the sweet.

What harvest have we gathered
That we may call our own?
Experience plainly tells us
We reap what we have sown.

May each returning autumn
Be rich with golden grain,
And in that glad Thanksgiving
We all may meet again.

THE HALLOWED PLACE

IN every clime the world around,
Vain restless man seeks treasurers new ;
Yet sweeter joys are never found,
Nor brighter scenes than childhood knew.

Though humble be the home, 'tis home ;
What hallowed scenes are pictured there !
It matters not where one may roam,
No brighter skies, nor fields more fair.

When, on some distant foreign shore,
The thoughts on fancy's pinions fly,
Back to the land beloved of yore,
And well remembered days gone by.

And every soldier, patriot true,
Or tourist, wandering here and there,
His home and country loves anew,
When once he breathes the foreign air.

THE RIFTED VEIL

THERE is a veil that hides from view
A fairer land than this, I 'm told,
Somewhere in yonder depths of blue,
Where azure skies are flecked with gold.

It is the veil that sorrow weaves,
For lives bowed down with weight of cares,
And many a broken thread it leaves,
That mars the web bereavement wears.

Its somber folds that drape the tomb
Where buried hopes in darkness sleep,
Hang heavy like a solemn gloom,
Where phantoms weird their orgies keep.

In anguish deep, with tear-dimmed eyes,
We see the dark side of the veil;
O, if the heart could know what lies
Beyond, 'twould hush our mournful wail.

Love weaves the lining soft and bright,
Faith rifts the darkest veil in twain,
Reviving Hope beholds new light,
And sweet Forgiveness soothes our pain.

Then fades the gloom in golden light,
The ghosts we dread to angels turn,
Whose smiles make life again seem bright,
And every tomb an empty urn.

Whose sacred dusts, absorbed by flowers,
  Like fragrance sweet, to heaven arise
From hallowed memory's breathing bowers,
  As burning incense to the skies.

Oft melts the heart in tenderness,
  When bathed in sorrow's bitter tears;
How sweet the peace that soothes to rest
  The weary soul, and calms our fears!

The darkest veil that shrouds the tomb,
  Where moulder the ashes of our dead
Give life to flowers of rich perfume,
  Whose sweetness is so freely shed,

Are but the filmy doubts, that rise
  And vanish, as the mists of morn,
When truth, all radiant from the skies,
  With glory guilds the life reborn.

Then open not yon darksome grave,—
  'Twill make our grief more hard to bear;
Let love's bright flowers their petals wave,
  And shed their sacred sweetness there.

Their spirits gone? Not yet, not yet!
  Fond memory keeps them ever near;
The hearts that love can ne'er forget;
  'Tis life, not death, makes loved ones dear.

THE GATEWAY

NO spot is more sacred than the grave,
Where calmly our loved ones are sleeping;
There tenderly, sadly, we laid them,
In sorrowful silence, while weeping.

The past, filled with sweet recollection,
The present, o'erburdened with sorrow,
Broke was the heart with its tenderness,
We dreaded the thought of the morrow.

We garland their graves with sweet flowers;
Their memories grow brighter with years;
Devotion will soften all sorrow,
And love cast a rainbow thro' our tears.

Why dread we the place where we laid them?
The tomb only holds what is mortal;
The Saviour once lay in death's chamber,
And hallowed forever its portal.

Their spirits still linger about us,
We may feel their presence every hour;
For who has not felt the sensation
Of some sweet and mysterious power?

As the soft caress of the dear one,
  Or a thought to thought conversation,
A whisper only heard by the soul,
  Alone in its quiet meditation?

As the incense of sweet breathing morn,
  Their spirits ever mingle with ours,
Blending this life with eternity,
  As blend the soft tints on the flowers.

The grave is eternity's gateway,
  No flesh ever passes its portal;
The earth but takes back what it gave us—
  The soul, as its God, is immortal.

CREATION

THE grass grows not for self alone,
Nor blooms the flower to blush unseen,
The earth to each gives of her own,
In turn is clothed in velvet green.
Each, in its sphere, content to live,
Glad to receive, and free to give,
Reflecting each the other's smile,
And richer blessings glow the while.

The modest dew drop wakes the flower
To beauty and to sweetness new,
And brighter makes the morning hour,
And sweet enchantment crowns the view.
Then, climbing up the golden beams,
When nature wakes from night's sweet dreams,
From heights above, 'mid skies serene,
The dew drop views the wondrous scene.

The moon and stars, with borrowed light,
  Content to glow when day is done,
Dispel the solemn gloom of night,
  That falls, when rests the sinking sun.
The earth looks up, the sky looks down,
And jewels, each the other's crown,
Whose blending sheens enrich the whole,
Awake to ecstasy the soul.

From out the dust of earth came one,
  The fairest of Creation's mold;
God breathed—the glorious work is done,
  And man stands forth, a living soul!
Of human mold, spirit divine,
What precious gifts, O Man, are thine!
Greater than angels thou art still,
Image of God, thou hast a will!

THE STREAM OF TIME

I'M drifting down the stream of time
To music's soft and liquid chime,
While laugh the waves in rippling rhyme.
In sweetest melody;
Adown its course I gently glide
Toward life's ocean, deep and wide,
Where ebbs and flows the restless tide
Of broad eternity.

Upon its crest the golden sheen
Of sun's red disk by day is seen,
Reflected from a sky serene,
In beauty shimmering there;
And myriad stars, like jewels bright
Plucked from the hidden depths of night,
All quivering at each motion light,
Bedeck its surface fair.

This wondrous stream ne'er backward flows,
But onward—on—it ever goes,
And broader, deeper, constant grows,
Fed by eternity;
And with its heavy load of cares,
It tells no tale of what it bears,
But lands its burdens safely there,
In next eternity.

MEMORIAL DAY

I SING of the arms and the heroes brave,
Who offered their lives their country to save,
Their valor was shown by the deeds that were done,
By the battles they lost, by the battles they won.

They nobly responded to their country's call
Yet knowing that many a comrade must fall;
A soldier his laurels will modestly wear,
With courage undaunted, defeat he will bear.

A foeman they met, right worthy their steel,
And tested his powers on many a field,
Now wavering, now rallying, each side in its turn,
All worthy the laurels their valor must earn.

When the battle was ended, and the fallen all lay,
There, mingled together the Blue and the Gray;
Then they knew how deadly the conflict had been,
That they had been fighting their kith and their kin.

God pity the nation divided in war;
A wound from a countryman leaves a deep scar,
And the angels in Heaven wept over that day,
When Americans met in battle array.

The heart that is brave when the battle is on,
Is melted to pity when the battle is done,

And the victor looks 'round with a sorrowful air
On the fallen, that lay so silently there.

No hatred nor malice that soldier then bore
As he stood on the field, all crimson with gore.
For American boys had fallen that day,
Some wearing the Blue, some wearing the Gray.

With hands that were gentle, and voice that was low,
He ministered alike to comrade and foe,
While the angels record with a golden pen
The magnanimous deeds of valorous men.

The boys that returned were weary with war,
The victor and vanquished bore many a scar,
But many a brave boy had fallen that day
That Americans met in battle array.

The survivors, with hearts as gentle as brave,
Lay garlands of flowers on a comrade's grave,
And tenderly, kindly fair flowers they strow
On the grave where silently slumbers the foe.

When the veterans have answered their final call,
A grateful country their deeds will recall,
And kindly remembering the Blue and the Gray,
Their children will honor Memorial Day.

And, at each return of this gladsome day,
On the soldier's graves sweet flowers they 'll lay;
'Twill banish all anger forever, 'tis said,
To laurel the graves of the gallant dead.

A WONDER

I OFTEN have wondered in the lonesome hours,
When the days seemed dark and the clouds hung low,
And the rain was falling in sleepy showers,
Why the Lord ever made things so.

I often have wondered, when the days were bright,
And the sun shone down with a redolent glow
With never a cloud to mellow its light,
Why the Lord ever made things so.

I wonder at this and I wonder at that,
And so, through the world, a wonder I go,
I can always find something to wonder at,
I wonder why this is so.

Yet the world turns round on its axis true,
And things will go on just the same, I know,
The skies will be clouded, the skies will be blue,
For the Lord wisely made it so.

BOND'S CREEK

BOND'S Creek is a stream not noted in song,
No pencil or pen its beauties portrayed;
Unwritten, unsung, it glided along,
Keeping time to the music its ripples made.

'Tis a gentle stream with its winding way,
Through a woodland dell where the wild flowers bloom;
Where the trees their pliant branches sway,
And the air is filled with a sweet perfume.

On its grassy banks I often have laid,
While the soft winds dried my tell-tale hair,
And listlessly watched the shadows that played,
In happy confusion around me there.

I well remember every swimming hole,
And the boys that played with me there and then,
Time cannot efface from memory's scroll,
The scenes at the deep swimming hole in the bend.

There, too, in the Spring I was wont to go,
With fishing tackle and a sportsman air,
And feel such a thrill as boys only know,
With a bite, a jerk, a fish in the air.

There the mussels like pearls on the strand,
  There shining pebbles on the riffles lay,
And the turtles' eggs in the soft warm sand—
  No brighter jewels for boys at play.

Alas, the changes that have been since then!
  The boys are scattered in many a clime,
And those who are living are gray-haired men,
  While many have crossed the river of time.

The forest I loved with its leafy shade,
  Shelters no longer the banks of the stream.
I shudder to think of the havoc made,
  And sometimes wonder if life is a dream.

A boy's life is real, just say what you may,
  The pleasures of youth are not free from alloy.
Let the passing years bring what e'er they may,
  I 'll never forget I once was a boy.

The valley, the creek and the forest wild,
  I see in my dreams wherever I roam.
Though far from the scenes I loved when a child,
  I ever remember Bond's Creek was my home.

FAITH

THERE is a faith that sees no rift
In clouds that slow, portentous drift,
Across the deep blue sky serene,
And hide from view a brighter scene.

It lifts us not to loftier height,
Nor brings to earth the heavenly light,
But leaves the soul to grope its way
'Mid somber scenes 'neath shadows gray.

There is a faith that brings no cheer
To hearts that mourn for loved ones dear,
Nor lifts from life its load of care,
But leaves the soul imprisoned there.

Where pending ills forebodings cast,
And sorrow's clouds come thick and fast,
While dark and darker grows the night,
And hope forever wings its flight.

'Tis such a faith that trusts not God,
Nor bows beneath the chastening rod,
Nor lifts the soul in contrite prayer,
From out the depths of dull despair.

The soul that trusts to mere belief,
Will find in sorrow no relief;
And heavier every burden grows,
And Heaven is blamed for all its woes.

There is a trusting faith sublime,
That soars above the heights of time,
And brings from Heaven that sweet repose
That only he who feels it knows.

A simple faith in love divine,
That bids us say, "Thy will, not mine;"
And though the way be dark and drear,
It makes us feel that God is near.

'Tis such abiding faith as this
That fills the soul with perfect bliss,
And makes this life a Heaven below,
And gives to death a sunset glow.

A faith that bids the present wait,
And leave the future ills to fate,
And lights the path the saints have trod,
And leaves the past alone with God.

THE NEW BIRTH

SUBMISSION to thy will Divine,
Helps me, O God, my burdens bear.
Thy glories but the brighter shine,
When bows the heart in contrite prayer.

Softly shining through tears of grief,
Love lights the chamber of the soul,
And gives to those a sweet relief,
Who feel the grave is not life's goal.

The body molders back to earth,
And from its dust fair flowers may rise,
Fit emblems of the soul's new birth,
With beauty borrowed from the skies.—

'Tis well to weep for those we mourn;
Tears melt the heart to tenderness;
The silent grief is hardest borne,
And sorrow saddest when suppressed.

Bid not thy throbbing heart be calm,
Nor tears of sorrow cease to fall;
Let memory be its soothing balm,
The lovelit scenes of life recall.

Let not my sorrows be forgot,
  But weave them in with memories bright,
And garland each familiar spot;
  The shade but softer makes the light.

However sacred be yon mound,
  There's many a spot in life as dear.
Hallowed memories make hallowed ground,
  And keep our loved ones ever near.

Immortal if the spirits be,
  Death surely hath for them no pain;
The soul from sin and sorrow free,
  Would ne'er resume this life again.

Submission lifts the veil of gloom,
  That hides the spirits from our view;
The pall but drapes an empty tomb;
  The soul is borne to life anew.

Why wish them back again on earth?
  Does selfishness our prayers control?
The death we dread is but the birth
  To life eternal of the soul.

THE TWO FLOWERS

I WATCHED the tender buds unfolding,
Into flowers of beauty rare;
An angel passing o'er my garden,
Just smiled and breathed a sweetness there.
I plucked the fairest of the blossoms,
And bore it to a suffering child;
A grateful tear fell on its petals
And glistened as she sweetly smiled.

Many a flower as kindly given
And blushing sweetly, graced her room.
She saw them all, and asking softly,
"Are all the flowers in Heaven in bloom?"
Her speaking eyes gave back the answer,
But plainly said, "I soon shall know."
And ere the flowers she loved had faded,
Her spirit caught a brighter glow.

I watched a tender bud unfolding
Into a fairer flower; 'twas mine;
God gave it me. O, how I loved it,
That precious Flower with soul divine.

An angel came. His breath was fragrant,
Softer His smile than mellow dawn.
He plucked my Flower, O God, how lonely,
Since she my darling one is gone!

Yes gone, on wings of sweetest fragrance,
With smile angelic 'round her brow.
And yet, I said, I can not bear it,
Life is scarce worth living now.
I felt a gentle presence near me,
And heard, or seemed to hear it say,
"Behold in yon bright heavenly bower
Thy precious Flower, 'twill bloom for aye."

CONTENTMENT

I HAVE wandered this wide world o'er and o'er,
In quest of the blessings of Pandora's chest,
I studied the modern and classical lore,
In the hope I would find where the blessings rest.
Neither travel nor books the tidings contained,
They only made answer, 'twas Hope that remained.

I have climbed the mountains all rugged and grand;
I stood in the canyons picturesque and wild;
I have roamed o'er valleys in many a land,
Like the rainbow chase of a restless child.
But mountains or valleys gave forth no reply,
And the canyons but echoed my weary sigh.

I have breasted the waves all foaming and high;
I have been where the isles of perfume are;
I have peered in the depths where the pearl beds lie,
And have looked on the jewels that sparkled there.
With many a treasure in its depth concealed,
Yet naught of the blessings the ocean revealed.

I have sat in the temples of ancient renown,
Where Justice was monarch of all she surveyed.
The law is her scepter, and wisdom her crown,

And all without question her mandates obeyed.
The Goddess of Justice was silent and grave,
And only a look was the answer she gave.

I asked of the sages of learning renowned;
I questioned the Druids of Anglesey's Isle;
I mingled with statesmen of wisdom profound,
As each was intent on his mission the while.
The Sages, the Druids, the wise men of State,
Concerning the blessings had naught to relate.

I left my home, restless and weary with care,
I found on returning, a gladsome surprise;
The queen of contentment enthroned in my chair,
With a smile on her lips, and love in her eyes.
She answered the question she read in my face:
"The blessings you seek are not in the chase."

Her hair was luxuriant and wreathed in a crown,
Bespangled with jewels like stars in the sea,
And her scepter was soft as the eider-down,
And its sheen as twilight on the upland lea.
As she moves her tresses, there falls a bright shower,
Like dew drops descending from rose-marine bower.

The blessings escaped from the mythical chest,
Yet they linger around, though oft in disguise,
And here with contentment continue to rest,
And give to the weary a welcome surprise.
It is thus you will find wherever you roam,
The richest of blessings are centered at home.

THE GUIDING STAR

WHILE shepherds watched their flocks by night,
There in the east a star arose,
And all the world has seen its light,
Which through the ages brighter grows,
And 'long life's dark and dreary ways,
Where oft the weary traveler strays,
It sheds its bright, effulgent rays,
To guide the wanderer home.

"On earth be peace, good will to men,
This night to you the Christ is born,"
Came ringing down that hallowed glen,
And each returning Christmas morn,
Through every age, in every clime
The echoes of that song sublime
Are wafted on in rythmic rhyme,
To guide the wanderer home.

Though age on age has rolled along
Since shepherds viewed that shining star,
And angels hailed it with a song,
Yet still it shines, tho' distant far,
And there amid the spheres divine,
The brightest orb of God's design,
The Star of Hope, 'twill ever shine,
To guide the wanderer home.

A MORNING IN JUNE

NIGHT holds the world in dreamy sleep,
And silence reigns supreme;
The stars their nightly vigils keep
Till twilight breaks the dream.

The morning sun first gilds the height
That reaches nearest Heaven;
When soars the lark in upward flight
Its clearest notes are given.

The flower its sweetest fragrance sheds
When bathed in morning dew;
The twilight weaves its golden threads
In fabrics soft and new;

And some it hangs on bush and tree,
Like jeweled tinsels rare;
And some it lays on lawn and lea
In shimmering beauty there.

The verdant landscape is inlaid
With soft and golden light;
And sparkles every leaf and blade
With dewy diamonds bright.

The fleecy clouds that fleck the sky
All fringed with sunbeams bright,
Like filmy curtains hanging high,
Catch up the morning light.

The incense-breathing forests shine
With gold upon the green;
The twilight glow, like smiles divine,
Lights up the gorgeous scene.

The birds awake to sing their praise
To one eternal King,
And Heaven answers back the lays
The myriad voices sing.

The zephyrs, passing, catch the strains
And bear them on and on;
And echoing hills send o'er the plains
The tidings of the dawn.

Sweet music wakes the sleeping morn,
When twilight leads the way;
And Nature, smiling, greets the dawn,
Of each returning day.

THE LONG AGO

I AM dreaming of the Long Ago,
Of the faces I used to know,
Of those hallowed places,
Where my fancy traces
The footprints of the Long Ago.

How happy were those days gone by,
Whether cloudy or clear the sky;
We rambled together,
No matter the weather,
My Long Ago playmates and I.

Oh, where are the playmates I knew?
Now, alas, their numbers are few!
With the years that are flown,
The children are grown;
They may never their youth renew.

Their foreheads are wrinkled with care,
And silver is streaking their hair;
From time they now borrow
Some joy and some sorrow,
While each his own burden must bear.

Many more are over the way,
"Just waiting our coming", we say.
'Tis the living who wait
The opening of the gate
To the dawn of a hopeful day.

Since I left the Long Ago strand,
I have traveled o'er many a land,
Just pausing now and then
To bury a friend,
Who dropped from the ranks of our band.

I can see little mounds over there,
In that Long Ago Land so fair;
Their laughter still ringing,
While angels are singing
To welcome the little ones there.

As I look o'er the chasm of years,
Full many a flower appears,
Whose beauty sublime
Grows brighter with time—
A rainbow I see through my tears.

Oh, yes, I am dreaming, I know,
Of the land where youth's flowers grow,
By memory kept bright
In love's softest light—
Yes, there is my Long, Long Ago.

CHARACTER BUILDING

IT wants but the touch of a master hand
To call forth music from the silent wire,
With fingers inspired he touches each strand
And wakes to ecstasy the tuneful lyre.

It wants but the touch of a painter's skill
To set the canvas with beauty aglow.
The picture comes not at the artist's will,
From deeper fountains inspirations flow.

The sculptor may chisel from marble fine
A statue with human-like form and face,
But genius, inspired with a love divine,
Only, can give to it beauty and grace.

Ambition may build a monument grand,
The name to be honored engraven there,
But only life's work forever will stand;
Matter is mortal—it matters not where.

No music so sweet as innocent mirth;
No painting so fair as a smiling face;
The heart gives music and painting their worth—
The character shines, but with inward grace.

No sculpture in stone can ever compare
With life animate with a soul divine;

Back of the sculpture an artist is there—
A living example of God's design.

Character building is an art sublime;
Man is the architect, each of his own,
As built it will stand enduirng as time,
More precious than any in metal or stone.

The life we live will our monument be,
Gilded with sunshine or dulled by despair;
Studded with jewels as the star-flecked sea,
Or marred by mistakes we fail to repair.

We build as we think, whatever we do,
And day after day the structure will grow;
Each moment will add to it something new,
It may be for weal, it may be for woe.

God gives the materials, man does the rest,
'Tis ours to do with this gift as we may,
For He, in His wisdom, hath deemed it the best
That man be left free to work his own way.

Be ever our hearts tuned to love's sweet lay,
Our lives kept aglow by affection's smile,
The soul's sweet music will gladden the way,
And life be sweeter and brighter the while.

It wants but the touch of a Christ-like love
To give to our lives a beauty sublime;
And in the hereafter, with angels above,
Our spirits to bask in that love-lit clime.

A GOLDEN WEDDING DAY

THEY sit together, side by side,
Serene, though aged now and gray,
Just fifty years a groom and bride,
For 'tis their golden wedding day.

Their lot is but the common one,
Of toil and care and sacrifice;
Their duty seen was duty done,
In this the happy secret lies.

They look across the years that span
The gulf where many treasures lie,
She sees a gallant, youthful man,
And he a maiden young and shy,

They see the lovelit courtship morn,
Whose dawning made the world look bright;
The bridal wreath she once had worn,
Of flowers still bathed in love's sweet light.

The tender buds, that one by one,
Burst forth a loved and loving flower,
The radiance of the noonday sun
The glow of evening's twilight hour.

A faded flower is fallen there,
Upon each withered leaf a tear,
Through which love casts a rainbow fair,
And memory holds it ever dear.

Thorns and flowers are growing there,
Sunshine and shadow, childlike play,
Their burdens once so hard to bear,
Yet borne somehow, some way, each day.

Their snowy hair is honor's crown,
To ripe old age by nature given,
As by some angel handed down,
Fit emblem of the courts of Heaven.

All these appear in memory's train,
And love lights up the trodden way,
And gilds the links that form the chain,
For such a golden wedding day.

MEMORY'S FLOWERS

SHOULDER to shoulder marched the boys,
With steady step and courage true,
They proudly bore their banners high'
Where deadly bullets thickest flew.

'Twas not a foreign foe they faced,
Who dared their country to invade,
Nor yet for conquest, nor for fame,
These warriors drew the battle blade.

Their country called, nor called in vain.
Lovers of peace, they dared to fight;
And every soldier manly strove
To win the cause he felt was right.

No anger rankles in the breast,
When brave men meet a gallant foe;
And when the bloody day is done,
The stoutest hearts will tender grow.

When kith and kin in war engage,
The pitying angel drops a tear,
And Heaven soothes the bleeding scars,
When peace enthroned enshrines the bier.

Four years the war clouds scowled,
The deep-mouthed canons roared alarm;
The flash of steel, like lightnings played;
A nation trembled in the storm.

When lo! through rifted clouds, sweet peace
Looked down upon the awful scene;
Then with her magic wand, she changed
The carnage red, to hopeful green.

Where battles raged fair flowers smile,
The crimson stream runs red no more;
The bleat of sheep, the low of kine
Supplant the musketry's mad roar.

Today a grateful people pause
Their deeds of valor to recall;
And on the graves, where sleeps their dust,
Flowers in sweet profusion fall.

Memory's flowers, bathed with tears
Wrung from the nation's darkest night,
Peace wreathes around the warrior's brow,
And glory keeps them sweet and bright.

THE SPRING IN THE WILDWOOD

I KNELT by a crystal fountain
Where oft I had quenched my thirst,
When life was sweet as the waters
That from the hillside burst,
And started on its wandering way
Like an innocent child at play,
Leaping and laughing the while,
Reflecting the sun's glad smile.

I made a cup as I used to,
From the leaf of an old, old tree,
And from it I drank at the fountain
That seemed to be murmuring to me
As it did in the long ago,
Oh, that far away long ago,
Whose depths are ever sublime,
Where shadows grow softer with time.

Although it now seems far away,
And yet, when I knelt by the spring,
And drank of its crystal water,
Or listened to its soft murmuring,

Or gazed on its surface so clear,
That far away seemed very near,
It lay like a restful sea,
An ocean of eternity.

And there lay the pebbles shining,
  Like jewels on its sandy floor,
And the moss-covered rocks about it
  As I saw them in days of yore.
And the shadows still playing there,
And the leaves that fluttered in air,
The same that I used to see,
Yet, oh, what a change in me!

My thoughts, like the stream, rippled on
  Amid scenes I remember well,
And the sunshine of childhood glowing,
  Made softer the shadows that fell.
And brighter the future now seems,
And sweeter are my childhood's dreams,
As softer life's twilight glows,
Waiting a sweeter repose.

Why seek for the fountain of youth?
  Think not it has wandered away;
It is only the stream that wanders,
  The fountain continues to play.
The heart is a spring of childhood,
Ever nestling in life's wildwood,
It bubbles and sparkles there,
Hope not to find it elsewhere.

A FOREST HYMN

I CHERISH the sweet recollections,
That carry me back to my childhood,
Where, when a barefoot boy I gathered
The rich juicy grapes in the wildwood;

The service, the mountain tea berry,
And the rich brown chestnut in the burr,
So dear to the hearts of all children,
And we knew just where all of them were.

The forests with their bright green foliage
In rich and luxuriant splendor,
With their trees tall, massive and branching,
And their saplings so graceful and slender;

And the green mossy carpet beneath them,
With the wild flowers blooming everywhere,
Are fit shrines for humble devotion,
For the God of creation is there.

There often I sit in deep reverie,
Imprisoned by fancy's magic power,
In some castle I built in my boyhood,
In the courts of yon leaf covered bower;

I can hear the birds singing as of yore,
The bark of the squirrel in the tree,
While strains of Æolean music,
Filled the woodland with sweet harmony.

Around me fantastical shadows
Are dancing like elfins at play,
With footseps as noiseless as twilight,
Keeping time to the zephyr's soft lay.

While a sunbeam stealthily stealing
Through a rift in the leaves left ajar,
Rests lightly on my cheek as a glow,
That came down from some far away star.

Yonder spring bubbling up from its fountain,
In musical laughter ripples on,
"And steeping the roots of the forest,
Tells no tale of the good it has done."

No wonder man bows in adoration,
In presence of nature's sacred shrine,
In the forest's deep solitude finding,
His highest conception of divine.

THE NEW YEAR'S MISSION

THE clock in the steeple struck the midnight hour.
From the depths of somewhere there came the new year,
His smile was as sweet as the blush of a flower.
His greeting was hearty, and full of good cheer.

He never looks back on the year that is flown,
Nor worries what the next may have in its store.
The present is all that he claims as his own,
'Tis all one can handle, what wants he with more?

The grave is too dark for his thoughts to dwell there;
They were not intended for such a sad fate.
The present is given this life to prepare;
The future uncertain, the past is too late.

He scatters his blessings like crystals of snow;
Too often we trample them under our feet;
Yet the warmth of his love continues to glow,
And blessings like snow will disolve in its heat.

Let the old year slumber in the old year's tomb;
Keep the New Year bright with good pledges
well kept;
The flowers are sweeter when out in full bloom;
The dead will sleep on as their fathers have
slept.

There will be no past in that Heaven above.
Eternity is all one eternal now.
Better live in the sunshine of present love,
Than to go through this life with a saddened
brow.

IMMORTALITY

TALK not to me of sleep eternal,
Of life that was and ne'er shall be,
All things created are immortal,
'Tis only change, not death, we see.

The fallen tree to dust returning,
But marks another cycle run,
Nor slumbers there its dust forever,
For death is but a life begun.

Perchance some sweetly blooming flower
With fragrance rich, in beauty rare,
May rise from out its mould'ring ashes,
And in its turn to slumber there.

Yet not the sleep that knows no waking—
Life is eternal, life divine,
The sun that sinks tonight in darkness
Will on the morrow surely shine.

Thus changing nature e'er reminds us
That life is but a shifting scene;
Our thoughts and deeds are life's reflection
Upon the swift revolving screen.

Regret nor time can never change it;
What once is done, is done for aye.
The scene is ours, 'tis as we make it;
We paint the colors as we may.

Each soul may make its life worth living
And leave behind a picture bright,
To cheer some weary wayworn traveler
Or guide some wandering one aright.

A COUNTRY BOY

A BOY in the country, like birds in the tree,
Flits hither and thither, light-hearted and free.
As a weed he grows up, unkempt and unshorn,
And little he recks if his trousers be torn.

His sister is dressed to look pretty and sweet,
And always is taught to be tidy and neat,
While the clothes of the boy, often soiled and torn,
Are made from the ones that his father had worn.

All the mischief that's done he ever must bear,
Yet he whistles away with a careless air;
Not thinking of evil, but ever in fun,
And oft he is sorry when the mischief is done.

He never is idle—there is much to do;
There are hornets to fight, and bumble-bees, too;
When the conflict is ended, he 'll whistle or sing,
Though his face be swollen from many a sting.

There, down in the meadow, is the old calf house,
The home of the lizard, the wasp, and the mouse;
A strange combination, methinks you will say,
Yet a houseful of fun for a boy at play.

Then there is the stream which will never grow old.
How many a secret its swimming pools hold!
And the boys are now playing the same old game
Their fathers once played, with spirits just the same.

There, the old water gap, stretched across the stream,
Where the snake crawls out in the sunshine to dream,
When a boy comes along with a ready stone,
And swift at the serpent the missile is thrown.

It is true he misses every now and then,
Yet he goes on thinking how it might have been,
And the sweetest of words that a boy can know,
When he throws and misses, "It might have been, though?"

Every spot on the farm is familiar ground,
He knows where the best of everything's found;
Where the rich brown chestnut and the service tree,
Where the May apple grows, and the mountain tea.

He knows every animal's hiding place,
And never more happy than when in the chase;
And he knows all the birds by the notes they trill;
And can echo each song with marvelous skill.

He rambles o'er fields with his dog at his side,
His boon companion, in emergency tried,

And woe to the vermin that ventures their way,
For a boy and a dog dearly love an affray.

And a noisier pair you seldom will see,
Than a boy and a dog roaming o'er the lea;
They will stand by each other through thick and
through thin,
And the harder the fight, the louder the din.

Wherever there's danger, a boy you may see;
Whether scaling a fence, or climbing a tree,
Or swinging in the air from a bending bough,
Or turning somersaults in the old hay mow.

He will play at his work, or work at his play,
Whatever is funny seems to come his way,
It matters but little what is, or is done,
Everything in nature is loaded with fun.

A boy in the country I ever would be,
Again with my dog to roam over the lea;
I'd waken the echoes through forest and glen,
If I could live over my boyhood again.

Turn backward, turn backward, ye cycle of time,
Inspire me again with youth's pleasures sublime;
Once more let me dwell in the land of my dream,
Where pleasures are real and things what they
seem.

HER MISSION

GOD touched the spring of human love;
A Frances Willard, woman true,
With heart inspired, and willing hands,
Said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?"

He touched the scroll of human woes,
She read in crimson letters there:
"The demon Drink is man's worst foe,
Go, seek the monster in his lair.

"When thou hast found his biding place,
To thee thy duty will be plain,
There lies the source of all his power,
And only there can he be slain."

Like womankind, she dared obey,
When Duty called the right to do;
Though oft the lowering heavens frowned,
Through rifting clouds appeared the blue.

She saw the mother's anxious face,
The children, ragged, hungry, cold,
The father, in his drunken rage—
The old, old story, often told.

"God, is it in man's appetite
The liquor demon hath his lair?"
She raised her eyes to Heaven for light;
The answer came: "Not there! Not there!"

The men and boys went staggering by,
She traced them from the legal bar;
"Enough!" she said: "Saloons must die!"
And then she joined the Crusade War.

Behind the bar a license hung—
The demon's right to live and kill;
The clinking coins like syrens sung
And hushed to sleep the nation's will.

Beyond the legislature halls
She saw the voter in his might,
And powerless woman sits and prays
While parties bind man's conscience tight.

By politicians guarded well
She saw the dragon in his lair;
With those who guard the public weal.
The ballot counts for more than prayer.

She learned the secret of his power;
Saloons are not his fortress strong,
Though wreck and ruin mark their path,
The nation's greed condones the wrong.

Entrenched behind the country's laws,
Protected by the party's shield,

The only weapon that can pierce
It is the lance the voter wields.

Her task was done; she did it well;
She found the monster and his den,
There on his throne of blighted homes
He sits, kept there by votes of men.

God touched the spring of Love Divine,
Then stood ajar the gates of Heaven,
And Frances Willard entered in;
For man's uplift her life was given.

She from the shining portals threw
That loving smile remembered well,
Then gently in with mother crept,
As on her brow a soft light fell.

And think you she is idle there,
While strive her sisters for the right?
Oh, no! Her spirit, lingering here,
Still leads her comrades in the fight.

THE RIDE TO METEETSE

FROM over the mountains a cry for help came,
'Twas wafted on the wings of electric flame.
Seven brave miners have gone to their rest,
And many are injured, God pity and bless.

"Oh, send us a doctor, one willing and strong,
The brave hearted ranchmen will speed him along,
And the God of their mothers will see him safe through,
If prayers of rough miners any good can do."

A doctor heard the cry, nor heard it in vain,
One hundred miles away; his duty was plain,
Though the distance be long and rocky the way,
"Just tell them the doctor will be there today."

With his heart on the goal and his eye on the trail,
Onward and onward on the wings of the gale
He sped on the way like a bird on the wing,
Not thinking of self but of men suffering.

A ranchman stood ready with a gallant steed,
Sure footed and strong and much noted for speed.
Dismounting, remounting, at each new relay,
The doctor sped on, but a moment's delay.

Over mountains, through valleys, swiftly he flew,
One thought in his heart, to the course he held true.
With peaks high above him, deep gulches below
O'er the winding trail he continued to go.

With his heart in his throat, a tear in his eye,
Many a ranchman watched the horseman go by,
And many a prayer reached Heaven that day,
That God would protect the doctor on his way.

At Meteetse lay miners groaning with pain,
Awaiting his coming, too brave to complain,
While their comrades were hoping with bated breath,
The doctor would outride the angel of death.

The clanking of hoofs far out on the trail,
Was wafted to their ears on the wings of the gale,
And down deep in their hearts the miners well knew
The angel of mercy was guiding him through.

In eleven anxious hours the doctor was there,
Due partly to pluck, maybe partly to prayer.
Be this as it may to accomplish his ends,
On sluggards or cowards God never depends.

Devotion to duty, no thought of renown,
The mountains still echo his praises around,
And no rougher road was e'er ridden to fame,
But brave Doctor Richards got there just the same.

In the records of heaven of good deeds below,
The ride to Meteetse will be found, I know,
And the name of that doctor will live for aye,
Who outrode the dark angel of death that day.

LOVE DIVINE

I THOUGHT I knew the depths of love,
And pleasures sweet were mine,
Till bitter sorrow bade me prove
My trust in Love Divine.

When Grief my heart had sore oppressed,
And quenched my fond desire,
The love that once my life had blessed
Burned like consuming fire.

I went to God in selfish prayer:
Oh, may this cup but pass!
My grief is more than I can bear,
But this one boon I ask.

Alas! alas! My hopes all fled,
And rent my heart in twain;
My prayers ne'er reached above my head,
My faith began to wane.

Oh, why is love to mortals given,
To fill the heart with joy,
To give the soul a taste of Heaven—
Its pleasures then destroy?

I sank upon my knees in prayer;
"Forgive me, Lord!" I said:
"Help Thou my grievous burdens bear;
Thy will be done,"—I prayed.

Despair arose—my heart grew light,
I saw my Love anew;
There, basking with the angels bright,
My love more tender grew.

And now I know the depths of love,
And sweeter pleasures mine,
The chastening rod will ever prove
Our trust in Love Divine.

THE VOYAGE OF LIFE

WE 'RE sailing on life's wide ocean
With our canvas unfurled to the gale,
Adjusting our lives to the motion
Of the winds and the waves that prevail.

We have left our moorings behind us,
And are crossing life's deep, trackless sea,
The shipwrecks of others remind us
How dangerous our voyage may be.

We are seeking a port over yonder
Where the ocean comes up to the sky,
And often, when weary, we wonder
Why so far, when it seems to be nigh.

Where the ocean comes up to the sky
Is only the limit of vision,
Beyond it far brighter glories lie
The soul there may find its Elysium.

'Mid the circling azure around us
We may look for the Harbor in vain,
For the deep blue azure seems boundless
As we sail over life's restless main.

Faith sees the bright star ever glowing,
And the needle of life points the way,
If true to its course we keep going,
We will anchor there safely some day.

We will cross the horizon somewhere,
When the days of our sailing are o'er,
And weary may we drop anchor there,
Where the waves wash the bright shining shore.

With Jesus our Pilot, we'll weather
Any storm that may ruffle life's sea,
He'll gather the winds all together,
And calm them as He calmed Gallilee.

PASSING BY

THE life that knows no law or creed
That changes not, can never feel
The joy that comes from doing good—
'Tis love that makes our pleasures real.

The soul is not of flesh and blood,
Nor yet an accident of birth.
It comes from God, to God returns
The spirit gives to man his worth.

To love one's neighbor as one's self,
To help another when in need,
To carry out the golden rule,
Is better far than man-made creed.

The priest that passed his neighbor by,
Was but a type of selfishness;
His thoughts were more on cast and creed,
Than of a brother in distress.

Likewise the Levite, priestly born,
Looked on, but not with pitying eye;
He saw the stranger, bruised and sore,
Yet only looked, and passed him by.

There came a man of ample means,
With heart as large as was his store,
Than rank or title, cast or creed,
To him humanity was more.

He took the stranger in his arms,
And gently placed him on his steed,
And bore him to a neighboring inn,
Providing there for every need.

The ever watchful Angel saw
This simple act in kindness done,
And placed it 'mid the jewels of Heaven,
Where shines today no brighter one.

Love ever brings its own reward.
The joy we give returns in kind
To bless the life that gave it birth,
And link us closer with mankind.

Our kindly deeds, to jewels turned
By Angels ever waiting near,
Bedeck the self-made crowns we wear,
And fit us for a nobler sphere.

When Christ was born the Angels hailed
His birth with music from the sky.

No prophet, priest, or sage or king
On earth ere claimed the rank so high.

With "peace on earth, good will to men"
He listens to each human cry;
No matter what his rank or creed,
He never passed a sinner by.

To live as lived our Savior King;
To harken to each pitying cry;
The sweetest pleasure to enjoy,
Is ne'er to pass a sufferer by.

And when life's labors all are o'er,
And evening shades are drawing nigh,
How sweet 'twill be, to feel and know
That Jesus will not pass us by.

THE OLD OAK TREE

OH, how I well remember the Old Oak Tree
As it stood, broad, branching and high
On the bank by the road where often we played,
My three little playmates and I;
Its wide-spreading branches and its bright green leaves,
Their shadows were merry as we,
As lightly they tripped at the whim of the breeze,
That whistled through the Old Oak Tree.

I would gather again the little brown cups,
And the acorns they used to hold;
More precious were they, to us children at play,
Than the richest nuggets of gold.
I would climb 'mid its branches tempting and high,
And gather the green white-oak balls,
So sour they make my mouth water e'en now,
As their taste my memory recalls.

When the summer was warm 'neath its cooling shade
With the soft wind fanning our brows,
We built our playhouses with sticks and with moss,
And we swung on its pendant boughs.
When autumn had turned its leaves crimson and gold,
And wantonly scattered them 'round,
No carpet was softer to children's bare feet
Than these old oak leaves on the ground.

Oh, could I but climb once more as in childhood,
And nestle 'mid its branches there,
And muse as I used to, swaying to and fro
In my green leaf castle in air!
Like the leaves of that Oak, when sunlight is falling,
Recollections their shadows cast;
Sometimes dark and gloomy, sometimes light and airy,
Yet ever they hallow the past.

Those playmates are scattered like its autumn leaves;
One dwells in the land of unknown,
But Fancy her magical pinions unfolds,
And gathers together her own;
And the Old Oak Tree, resounding with laughter
Of children who once sported there,
Now shelters the land of my childhood's bright dreams,
Where life is untrammeled by care.

THE MUSIC OF THE DEPARTED

THERE'S music in the laughter
Of those we loved when here,
It echoes back from Heaven
And keeps them ever near.

We hear the soft notes falling
In richest cadence low,
And feel that sweet sensation
That hearts bereaved may know.

It touches chords responsive
In every human breast,
That swells with deep emotion,
And calms the soul to rest.

Amid the solemn silence
That settles like a gloom,
We hear its notes' fine echo
From shores beyond the tomb.

And oft when sad and lonely
And life seems dull and drear,
We hear their spirit voices,
In songs we used to hear.

We know that they are waiting
  Just waiting, over there,
And by and by we 'll join them
  And rest from every care.

You tell me I am dreaming?
  Then life is all a dream;
Our sorrows are unreal,
  And joys not what they seem.

No, no! all things are real,
  On earth, in heaven above,
The soul may hear the singing
  Of those we loved and love.

LIFE'S RECORD

WHAT of the old year gone?
What blessings did it bring?
Now buried in the past,
What memories 'round it cling?
What record hast thou made
For thee and thine to read?
What comforts will it bring
To thee in sorrow's need?

When with thy thoughts alone
And in some quiet place,
May thou not something find
Thou gladly would'st erase?
The closing years, at dawn
Gave thee a spotless page,
What thou hast written there
Thy future doth presage.

There every thought and word
And every action done,
Is written on its page—
And duties left undone.
And every kindly smile
Helps keep the record fair,
And every frown you wore
Is darkly shadowed there.

Whate'er is done is done,
Too late to change it, when
The old year seals the scroll—
It wields a faithful pen.
The past should be the grave
Where sorrows sweetly sleep,
And on its verdant mound
Bright flowers their vigils keep.

Sleep on, ye old year, sleep!
The snow, thy winding sheet,
Dissolving in the spring,
Brings flowers fair and sweet,
And may fond memory weave
Them into garlands fair,
And where our sorrows sleep,
We 'll kindly lay them there.

LIFE'S VAPORS

THE water from the ocean rises,
On vapor wings ascending high;
Softer than eider down and fleecy,
It forms in clouds across the sky.

Like things of life, with forms fantastic,
Sporting 'mid bowers of ether blue,
The elfin clouds, all light and airy,
Appear in shapes each moment new.

They often make the skies seem leaden;
Sometimes they hang in somber folds,
Gloomy and dark, as ills foreboding,
The air a solemn silence holds.

With tongues of flame and voice of thunder,
The storm clouds set their furies free;
And nature, 'mid the wild commotion,
Looks on the wondrous revelry.

There comes a calm, and all is over,
Dissolving mists reveal the sky;
And Nature breathes a sweeter fragrance,
When weeping clouds have all passed by.

'Tis thus in life, with souls immortal;
As soft as visions, mists arise,
And, fancy-shaped, as fleeting shadows,
That flit across our moonlit skies.

They oft appear like some weird fantom
In troubled dreams, foreboding ill;
And foul suspicion makes them real,
And misery mocks, yet dares not kill.

Sometimes they form in clouds of sorrow,
And heavy hang, like sullen gloom;
And darker grow our skies and dreary—
We tire of life, yet dread the tomb.

When breaks the storm we long have dreaded,
And pent up tears of sorrow flow,
Our lives grow calm, and Heaven seems nearer,
We know not why, yet feel it so.

Submission stoops to conquer sorrow;
Love melts to tears the hearts that mourn;
And on its pinions, soft as azure,
Above life's storms our griefs are borne.

AMBITION'S DREAMS

I DREAMED of wearing a chain of pure gold,
And I carried a watch of the finest mold;
When I looked on its face, I very well knew,
The time that it marked on its dial was true.

I dreamed of honors and of high renown.
In legislative halls my voice echoed 'round:
I learnedly argued the questions of State,
With statesman distinguished for wisdom, and great.

I dreamed of sailing o'er the ocean wide,
On the finest vessel that breasted the tide;
When the storms were raging, and the billows high,
There was no one calmer or happier than I.

The sweetest of dreams of my youthful life,
Was a quiet home and a charming wife,
And children to play 'round the family hearth,
And father and mother to enjoy their mirth.

I carry a watch of the plainest nickel,
As a keeper of time 'tis ever fickle;
My honors are empty as a last year's nest;
The least said of my fame perhaps is the best.

My sailing is done in a cheap john boat,
And adown life's river I paddle or float;
I watch the big steamers go puffing along;
Each toots his own whistle to a worshipping throng.

Full many a girl both handsome and true,
Would suit me for a wife I very well knew.
But, alas for my thoughts! they never went further:
I basked in her smiles, she married another.

Alas! for my dreams, not a Lass for me;
The sweetest of visions "gang aft agley."
I pity the fellow who basks in a smile,
And quietly dreams of the sweet after-while.

NEAL DOW

THE warrior brave, when the battle is o'er,
Stands silent and grave, when the victory's won.
He looks on the field all crimson with gore
And his eyes grow moist at the carnage done;
And his heart is filled with pity that day,
For comrade and foe, who gallantly fell;
As mangled in heaps together they lay,
More sorrow than pride makes his bosom swell.

Peace hath heroes as dauntless and brave
As ever drew sword or carried a gun.
They war not to kill, but ever to save;
They garland their foe when victory is won,
They look on the field all blooming in flowers,
Their laurels unstained by blood of the slain.
The sunlight of peace falls in gentle showers
And brighter the world for each victory gained.

Neal Dow was a man of heroic mould
With a will to dare and a mind to think.
He saw his country for revenue sold
And the land he loved in the toils of drink;
And statesmen who shape the nations's affairs
Feeling the pressure of organized wrong;
While Christians depend alone on their prayers,
Forgetting that votes make petitions strong.

When the sword of Jehovah and Joshua smote,
  Then Jericho's walls in confusion fell.
So the Christian's prayers and the Christian's vote
  Will level the walls of organized hell.
Thus thought the hero we honor today
  And with him to think was to do and dare,
Stern duty's command is to work and pray,
  Prayers without works are mere castles in air.

When the stork flew into that home one night
  Little it dreamed what a boon it bore,
His country knows now who guided its flight
  Thro' the trackless realm to this wine-cursed shore.
His life made brighter the land of his birth
  And many a home happier today.
God knows what a brave and pure life is worth
  And he sends angels to guard the way.

When a warrior dies his countrymen mourn,
  They tell of the deeds by his valor won,
They show his banner on battlefields torn,
  And over his grave fire the minute-gun,
They follow his bier at a soldier's pace;
  In martial splendor they lay him to rest,
And history assigns him an honored place
  With bronze or with costly marble dressed.

But when Neal Dow died the angels were there.
  Every kindly deed unfolded a flower,
And wreathing them in his coronal fair
  They hallowed forever this sacred hour,

And a grateful people ever will bless
The name he honored for his country's weal.
No greater tribute can language express
Or pencil portray or sculpture reveal.

No bronze or marble can add to his fame.
With a golden pen on the deathless page
The angel of God recorded the name
Of Cornelius Dow, the hero and sage.
And in grateful hearts his monument stands
As stainless as love, enduring as time,
And on it engraved by unsullied hands
"He lived for others; his death was sublime."

THE OLD HOMESTEAD

WE gather 'round the old homestead,
Amid the scenes we used to know:
The years, as moments quickly sped,
Are numbered with the long ago.

So far, and yet how near it seems
Across the span of years that lie
'Twixt childhood's hopes and old folk's dreams—
Just over there, the sweet gone by.

We 're all, all here; 'tis hallowed ground;
Here blends the present with the past;
And recollections, clustering round
Like twining tendrils, hold us fast.

And memories, like the cottage vine,
That thatched the porch in living green,
Around our lives do still entwine,
And sweet enchantment guards the scene.

The house, the yard, the deep round well
With quaking windlass, quaint and queer,
To us the same old stories tell,
Stories that bring the past so near.

Here, too, the sweet old fashioned flowers
Are still as fresh as summer's morn,

Their petals bathed in dewy showers,
As if to beauty newly born.

The song of bird, the hum of bee,
The croak of frog in yonder stream,
The soft wind sighing o'er the lea,
Are like some well remembered dream,

From which we wake, but all too soon,
To busy life that seems less real,
There comes to age no sweeter boon,
Than feel the joys we used to feel.

The softly fading twilight hours
Bring once familiar things to view,
And memory wakes the withered flowers
To beauty and to life anew;

And friends departed gather 'round
To worship here at memory's shrine,
Till all are here on hallowed ground:
Their presence makes life seem divine.

'Tis sweet to sit at eventide,
And, pensive, watch the fading light
In golden silence softly glide,
From weary day, to restful night.

And in the quiet evening hour,
When silence soothes the world to sleep,
To yield to some mysterious power,
And gently in with childhood creep.

A FABLE IN RHYME

'TWAS once upon a time long past,
(For so the ancient fab'e ran)
Some shining seed an angel cast
Upon the earth, to grow for man,
To bring forth fruits and blossoms fair,
To beautify the world anew,
To help mankind their burdens bear,
And keep God's blessings e'er in view.

"When beauty smiles, contentment reigns,
And all the busy world's aglow;
Each flower a germ of fruit contains,
By angel's hands rich blessings flow;
A kindly smile is love's sweet flower,
And love the fruitage of a smile,
Contentment soothes each passing hour,
And brighter grows the world the while.

"The freighted breath from scented flowers,
Like sweet incense will upward rise,
And mingle with descending showers,
Of sweeter fragrance from the skies;
Man loves the charm that beauty lends,
It fills the soul with pure delight,
The richest blessings heaven sends,
Are those that make the world more bright."

Thus spake the angel as he gazed
Upon the seed that he had sown,
Then as his eyes he upward raised,
There flashed a light from Allah's throne,
And well he knew it was a flower
With fragrance rare of love divine,
An angel threw from Eden's bower
Where bright eternal beauties shine.

Then Satan came; with evil eye,
He saw the seed the angel sowed;
His brow grew dark, his face awry,
As up and down the earth he strode;
He knew that every seed would bear
A plant with fragrant beauty crowned;
When Heaven and Earth their bounties share,
Then peace and plenty will abound.

He knew the seeds of discontent
He sowed in Eden's garden fair,
That doomed mankind to banishment,
And made life's burdens hard to bear,
Would grow for nought 'mid such as these,
For beauty sheds her sweetness rare,
Her sweetness all around she breathes,
Man sees, he feels, he worships there.

All this did Satan know, and more,
And puzzled long his cunning brain;
Many a scheme he pondered o'er
To make the angel's work in vain;

For man to live in dark despair,
His way through life to blindly grope,
He knows not how, he recks not where—
To Satan was his strongest hope.

At last he said, "'Twill never do,
For man to see the world grow bright,
So o'er these seeds fresh dirt I'll strew,
And bury every one from sight,
And when the rains from Heaven fall
And all the ground is dripping wet,
Then every seed will rot, and all
Mankind will soon their God forget."

No sooner thought, than 'twas begun,
He scattered dirt the earth around,
And when at last his task was done,
There lay not one above the ground.
Then came the rain from clouded skies,
And soon the fertile soil was turned
To slimy mud, and in his eyes,
A gleam of fiendish pleasure burned.

"But nought," said he, "but weeds, I 'm sure
Can flourish in so foul a place;
No good can come from thoughts impure,
Nor beauty 'dorn a frowning face;
Intention makes the act a sin,
Or crowns it with redeeming grace;
Reflections of the thought within
Are often mirrored in the face."

Through rifted clouds the sunshine broke
And bathed the land in golden showers,
The slumbering seeds to life awoke,
And Beauty crowned the world with flowers ;
God plants the seeds in honest hearts,
We ofttimes wet them with our tears ;
When Christ the clouds of sorrow parts
Then Love, divine, will calm our fears.

CHILDHOOD

THE morn of life, with pleasures rife,
Is childhood's happy hour;
When smiles play on the dimpled cheek
As sunbeams on the flower.

No fairer flower, with scented breath
And sunlit beauty rare,
Than lovelit beauty, soul-inspired,
That children's faces wear.

Sweeter by half, the childish laugh,
Than any song yet sung,
The dearest words the heart may know
Fall from the prattling tongue.

The laughing child, not yet beguiled
By sin's deceptive ways,
The Savior makes the type of Heaven,
And angels sing its praise.

With faces bright and spirits light,
The children greet each morn,
Their joyous sports and childish mirth
Of innocence is born.

Love touches light the heart-string tuned
To nature's dulcet key,
And music sweet wells softly forth
In richest melody.

No sounds so sweet as baby's coo
When love has tuned the ear,
It wakes new joys within the breasts
Of those who hold it dear.

And from beyond the vale that hides
Its form from earthly view,
We hear, in sweetest cadence soft,
The echoes of that coo.

When oft in dreamy silence sad
Familiar strains of yore
Are wafted in on wings of love,
As from some far off shore,

The heart takes up its sweet refrain
Our childhood loves to hear,
And echo sends it back to Heaven
To those we loved when here.

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

"AM I my brother's keeper?"
Was asked in days of yore.
The question oft repeated
Comes to us o'er and o'er.

We hear the echoing answer
In every wailing cry;
It comes from depths of sorrow,
On every weary sigh.

Where is thy erring brother,
Whom sin has led astray?
What hast thou done to save him,
Or safely guard his way?

Alas! Too oft the answer
Is born of selfishness;
"Am I my brother's keeper?"
Helps no one in distress.

Where is thy needy neighbor,
Who feels misfortune's blow?
What hast thou done to comfort
Him in his bitter woe?

To share each other's pleasures
Makes life more pleasant here;
To share each other's sorrows
Brings Heaven very near.

This world was made for pleasure,
It pleased God so to do;
The fragrance of the flower
Is sweeter for the dew.

Our lives will grow the brighter
When smiling through our tears;
The smiles and tears for others
Make friendship doubly dear.

"Am I my brother's keeper?"
Make answer as thou wilt;
The brand upon thy forehead
Will ever prove thy guilt.

To wear a smile for others,
To lend a helping hand,
Will make thy brother's keeper
A nobler, happier man.

THE DAWN OF EASTER

AS slowly crept the twilight on,
Retreating life gave way,
Redeeming love awoke the dawn
Of Resurrection Day.

The Angels bright, the story told
Of Christ the risen Lord,
Whose death and resurrection hold
A hope of man's reward.

When Jesus died the heavens frowned,
But smiled on Easter morn,
And Christ the Lord, with glory crowned,
Made jewels of the thorn.

The power of death he set at naught,
God's promise to fulfill,
And man's redemption, dearly bought
Was but God's holy will.

As ages onward slowly roll,
The twilight of that dawn
Still lights the darkness of the soul,
As on that Easter morn.

Oh! Savior, may that twilight glow
Yet brighter, brighter shine,
Till all the world may see and know
The proof of love divine.

LIFE'S TWILIGHT

WHEN morning breaks the birds awake
To greet the coming day,
And nature smiles her silent praise,
As darkness fades away.

The bud that holds within its folds
The coming blossom fair,
Will greet the life that gives it birth,
And sweetly scent the air.

The morning twilight wakes the world
To beauty and to song.
The opening flowers with fragrance greet
The sweetly singing throng.

The evening twilight softer glows,
As night creeps slowly on,
And nature folds her arms in sleep
To wait another dawn.

The stars that woke creation's morn,
Now sing the world asleep,
And through the night, in calm and storm,
Their silent vigils keep.

When falls the even-tide of life,
And night is drawing near,
'Tis sweet to gently fall asleep,
And feel that God is here.

To fall asleep to things on earth,
Or rather wake to know
That death is not eternal sleep,
Nor life a dream, or show.

LAUGH AND BE HAPPY

BORROW not trouble from tomorrow;
There's room in the past for all sorrow;
In forgetfulness there let them sleep,
And the grave will its sad secrets keep,
And the world grow brighter each day.

This life is too short for bewailing;
Do not waste your time in assailing
The faults you may find in another;
'Tis better such thoughts you would smother,
And think of some good things to say.

This life is too bright to be clouded;
'Tis only the dead that are shrouded;
True kindness our anger will banish,
At a smile every frown will vanish,
A laugh will drive sorrow away.

In this life is the time for giving;
The flowers but bloom for the living;
A garland of roses of kindness
To loved ones more closely will bind us,
And gladden our lives while we stay.

Let the future remain in mystery;
Let the past be buried in history;
The present has enough of its own;
Many things are far better unknown;
The troubles we borrow don't pay.

Let us laugh and be happy today,
Though the shadows around us may play;
You will find in the great hereafter
The heavens will ring with sweet laughter,
And sorrow will vanish for aye.

SUBMISSION

THE sky that knows no somber clouds
Gives not the earth a fruitful shower;
The heart that ne'er hath mourned its shrouds,
Hath never felt love's softening power.

The roots of plants in darkness grow,
The leaves and blossoms seek the light,
Our lives with tenderness will glow
When we have felt bereavement's blight.

Each midnight hath its laughing star,
Though clouds may oft its smiles obscure;
The soul will find love's gate ajar,
That looks beyond for refuge sure.

When night falls 'round us like a gloom,
The sun on other lands is shining,
Hope rifts the veil that shrouds the tomb,
And sees within a golden lining.

Christ suffered pangs of bitter grief,
Yet said, "Thy will be done, not mine;"
Submission is a sweet relief
To those who bow to will divine.

OUR SWEET GONE-BY

WHATE'ER we do, where'er we roam,
On business or on pleasure bent,
Our thoughts e'er center 'round the home
Where childhood's happy hours were spent.

Where hearts are light as birds, and free,
And smiles are like sunbeams at play;
Where laughter, born of childish glee,
Vies with the robin's cheerful lay.

Think not that thoughts can e'er efface
The scenes that youth makes bright and fair;
Or yet from memory's page erase
The names that love has written there.

Around them halos softer glow,
Where shadows cross life's weary way;
From out the depths of long ago,
We hear a sweet and tender lay.

'Tis like a mother's lullaby,
When drooping eyelids weary close,
As low and soft as evening's sigh
That lulls the flowers to sweet repose.

And here around the homestead old,
From voices in the sweet gone-by,
We hear the old, old stories told,
We hear the same sweet lullaby.

As distant music drawing near,
Æolian-like its cadence falls;
The tuneful thoughts the soul may hear,
Are spirits answering to our calls.

The spirits lingering over there,
Where youthful hopes expectant lie,
Keep sweet the old folks' dreamland fair,
And memory guards our sweet gone-by.

THE CROWNING WORK

GOD spake; eternity was moved,
And from its mighty depths sublime
Creation came forth in her prime;
Her advent woke the dawn of time
To beauty and to song.

He looked; a world with verdure crowned,
Teeming with life, sportive and gay,
Where death once held its silent sway,
Was speeding on its cycling way
Through trackless realm and dark.

He smiled, and light like glories fell
From heights celestial, on the scene,
And beauty, robed in gold and green,
Enthroned herself as Nature's queen,
And heaven blessed her sway.

He breathed; His breath like incense rose
From flower and leaf upon the air,
And playful breezes sporting there,
Caught up the fragrance rich and rare,
And bore it back to Heaven.

He touched the harp, to Nature tuned,
And music, on the waves of sound,
Was wafted all the world around,
And silence woke from sleep profound
To hear the melody.

He viewed his work and called it good;
Creation can but laws obey,
Time dares not tarry by the way,
And everything its part must play
In one Eternity.

From nothing was creation made;
Return to nothing is its doom,
Eternity to be its tune,
And there amid the silent gloom,
Slumber on forever.

He touched creation's dust, and lo!
There came forth man—a living soul.
O'er earth he gave him full control,
And heaven to be his final goal,
And immortality.

To make His likeness more complete,
God gave to man a sovereign will,
A destiny for good or ill,
Yet stayed his hand the soul to kill—
The image of its God.

The soul, immortal as its sire,
Was never formed from lifeless clod,
Nor shall it moulder with the sod,
But rise on wings of love to God,
Or sink below forever.

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